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ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	A-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	INL-00	DODE-00
	DS-00	UTED-00	VC-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01
	VCE-00	NSAE-00	TEST-00	USIE-00	BBG-00	IIP-00	DSCC-00
	DRL-02	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/003W			

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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0223  
INFO NSC WASHDC

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SIPDIS

AF/PD FOR COX, ROBERTSON, AF/S, NSC FOR JENDAYI FRAZER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: ZI PREL PHUM

SUBJECT: MEDIA REPORT - TELEPRESS CONFERENCE GENERATES DEBATE

11. ON OCTOBER 31 POST HOSTED A TELEPRESS CONFERENCE TO EXPLORE THE TOPIC "PRESS FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY IN TIMES OF NATIONAL CRISIS: HAVE THE RULES CHANGED SINCE SEPTEMBER 11?" THE OBJECTIVE OF THE PROGRAM WAS TO PROVIDE A PLATFORM TO DISCUSS MEDIA FREEDOM ISSUES AND AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE KEY POINTS ABOUT THE WAR AGAINST TERROR. FOR THIS PROGRAM WITH JOURNALIST AND MEDIA FREEDOM ADVOCATE ADAM CLAYTON POWELL III, WE HAD AN AUDIENCE OF ABOUT 60 JOURNALISTS JOURNALISM STUDENTS, POLITICAL AND MEDIA COMMENTATORS, REPRESENTATIVES OF MEDIA AND CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS, AND GOVERNMENT-OFFICIALS FROM THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY. AMONG THE PARTICIPANTS WAS MR. JEALOUS MAWARIRE, A JUNIOR REPORTER WITH THE GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED WEEKLY "THE SUNDAY MAIL." THAT PAPER'S NOVEMBER 4 EDITION CARRIED AN OPINION PIECE BY MAWARIRE. EXCERPTS FOLLOW.

12. ".THE MOVE THAT HAS BEEN TAKEN BY THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT TO CONTROL THE OPERATIONS OF THE MEDIA IN AMERICA, OBTINENTLY ON THE PRETEXT THAT INFORMATION FLOW IN THIS TIME OF NATIONAL CRISIS IS NECESSARY, IS REGRETTABLE. . . ADAM CLAYTON POWELL III. . . TOLD PARTICIPANTS THROUGH THE TELEPHONE THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAD MOVED IN TO CURTAIL MEDIA FREEDOM AS A MOVE TOWARDS BEEFING UP SECURITY MEASURES. . . THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN IT UPON ITSELF TO DESCEND UPON THE FREEDOM OF ITS CITIZENS TO FREELY EXPRESS THEMSELVES AND IF WE ARE MADE TO BELIEVE THAT THERE IS FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA IN AMERICA WE MIGHT AS WELL BE TOLD THAT SATAN IS GOD'S BEST FRIEND."

13. COMMENT: MR. POWELL NEVER SAID THAT THE USG HAS "MOVED IN TO CURTAIL MEDIA FREEDOM" OR ANYTHING ALONG THOSE LINES. WE DID DISCUSS THE DEBATE OVER WHETHER OR NOT US NETWORKS WERE RIGHT TO SHOW THE BIN LADEN STATEMENT, AND OVER THE VOA'S BROADCAST OF THE MULLAH OMAR INTERVIEW, BUT THE POINT OF THOSE DISCUSSIONS WAS PRECISELY THE OPPOSITE OF MR. MAWARIRE'S THESIS. WE ARE DRAFTING A LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUNDAY MAIL TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT.

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